

Show of Hands

Fairfax County Public Library Volunteer Newsletter



Winter 2006

Touch the Mouse, Grab the Mouse

It's often hard to remember that some in our community still need help navigating a Web-based world. Some would like to e-mail their digital-savvy grandkids. Others, new to the U.S., want to read online newspapers in their native countries.

Each of the Fairfax County Public Library's 21 branches offers opportunities for the less-computer-literate to sharpen their skills. Some provide special workshops and many offer one-on-one tutoring. The library could not extend this service without the help of a cadre of volunteers, who are both skilled with computers and able to work with individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds and levels of proficiency. We call them our Tech Force.

At the Thomas Jefferson Library in Falls Church, Paul Hyman has been one of the library's tech volunteers for more than six years. "As a retired university-level teacher, I thought volunteering would be the best way to keep up-to-date with state-of-the-art computer technology," he explained. When he began volunteering, he initially took some training on how to teach computer skills. "They taught us to encourage the patron to touch the mouse, grab the mouse by the tail."

He uses that approach to this day. Many of those he assists are older individuals with diverse needs. One person wanted to know when he should take his vitamins. Paul showed him the many health resources on the library's Web site that would help him research that information. Another, a former Royal Air Force bombardier, was trying to locate the United Kingdom's Bomber Control Center to find lists of his missions and crews. A father brought his daughter in to discover online homework resources that would help her learn more about dinosaurs.

At the nearby Woodrow Wilson Library, Stuart Feldstein has been volunteering for the past two years.



Thanks to a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, library users can learn basic word processing and spreadsheet programs at the branch. Stuart has helped seniors learn how to write and attach letters to e-mail; find addresses of relatives overseas and develop many other basic skills. "The people are very nice," he says. "I get into great conversations." He is also proud that he can usually teach people basic word processing skills in three sessions.

Martha Fitzpatrick at the Kingstowne Library brings some special skills to her volunteering. An amateur genealogist, she offers workshops once or twice a year that introduce people to tools for exploring their family histories. She concentrates on the two genealogy databases available through the library's Web site – Ancestry Library Edition and HeritageQuest, but also includes other resources, such as Cyndi's List and World GenWeb. She helps beginners as well as experienced genealogists with their research.

These are but a few of the experienced tech volunteers who help individuals master the skills of the digital age. If you are interested in joining the library's Tech Force, contact your local branch or the Fairfax County Public Library's volunteer coordinator at Kate.Wanderer@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-324-8332. To visit the volunteer section of the library's Web site, or to apply online, go to the library's Web site at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library. Click on "Do You Know...You Can Volunteer at the Library?"



- Pat Bangs

"You Made My Day Shine"

Meg, a young volunteer at the Herndon Fort-nightly Library, had to move across the river to Maryland. After a farewell party at the branch, she sent the staff a thank-you note. Here are some excerpts:

Dear Mrs. Gangai, Mrs. Merchant, Mrs. Cason, Linda M. (my cube buddy) and Mr. Lapinell:

Thank you so much for your gesture of kindness. I do hope that the Montgomery Co. Libraries like and appreciate me as much as the Herndon Library! Although it won't be the same, I will never forget all the wonderful women and man (I haven't forgot about you, Mr. Lapinell) who made my largest and longest volunteer project experience so wonderful! You are all truly wonderful people and I hope other volunteers and staff members know that you're all unique and heartfelt individuals. Going to the library every Tuesday, well most Tuesdays, and seeing all of you made my day shine. Just a smile or a hi to me helped my day! I still hope to keep in touch after moving to Maryland. Thank you again.

All the Best

Meg

Skip the Gym: VolunteerFest at Reston

October 22 dawned cold and stormy, less-than-perfect conditions for the Reston Regional Library's VolunteerFest® landscaping project that would occupy our 15 volunteers for half the day. (VolunteerFest® is sponsored each October by Volunteer Fairfax and encourages Fairfax County residents to dedicate a day to volunteering in the community. Reston is one of several library branches which offered 2005 VolunteerFest® opportunities.)

We are nothing if not flexible, so turned to our alternative indoor projects. There is always something to do in a library! A few die-hard

enthusiasts begged to work outdoors with Library Assistant/Master of the Grounds Brian Buck, but the other 10 volunteers were assigned to me. Little did they know that they would receive a workout of another type: shifting. (Shifting involves physically moving books from shelf to shelf to free up space.)

With their help, we shifted the juvenile nonfiction to make room for our new Spanish collection and reorganized the young adult collection to boot. The volunteers also helped empty several picture book carts, putting the books back on the shelves. I must admit that my favorite part of the day came when a reporter from the *Reston Connection* skeptically asked me if volunteers were "really helpful."

"Absolutely!" I replied. "This type of work is impossible to do when we are open. It would take weeks for staff to get it done, because our first priority is to help the public. When they ask us a question, or need help, we can't ignore them to move books around."

Just then a customer pushed his way between us, begging me to help his daughter find a book about colonial crafts.

"Please excuse me," I said to the laughing reporter. Later, I had to convince the journalist that I had not paid that customer. The timing was just coincidental, I explained.

The next day at the local grocery store, I ran into one of the volunteers. "We had such a great time! I had no idea that the library was such a busy place. And I have to tell you that shifting books gave me a great workout. I can tell I used all kinds of muscles yesterday," she laughed. Then she gave me her card, and made me promise to call her whenever we needed help.

Absolutely! I have noticed the junior picture books—JPs—are getting tight again.

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Two teens contemplate community volunteer opportunities at the October 4 teen volunteer fair at the George Mason Regional Library in Annandale.

Teen Volunteer Fairs Spread the Wealth

More than 800 teens and their parents attended volunteer fairs, co-sponsored by the library and Volunteer Fairfax, at five library branches in October. The branches included the Centreville Regional Library, the George Mason Regional Library, the Patrick Henry Library, the Pohick Regional Library and the Thomas Jefferson Library. The fairs were designed to connect teens – many of whom need to complete community volunteer hours for school – with local organizations that need their help.

Teens and parents browse volunteer opportunities at the teen volunteer fair at the Patrick Henry Library on October 15.



Volunteers and Foundation Share Similar Goals

Volunteers for the Fairfax County Public Library understand the importance of contributing valuable time and expertise to ensure that our library system remains among the best in the nation. Volunteers share a common goal with the Fairfax County Public Library Foundation, Inc.: to enhance this wonderful library through private resources. Just as volunteers support dedicated library staff, the foundation provides funding for books and materials; new and better technology; the Friends Scholarship Fund academic and continuing education scholarships; literacy outreach; and programs featuring renowned authors.

The library foundation offers their sincere appreciation to all volunteers who have joined other individuals, organizations and foundations in supporting them financially. Please know that every contribution will have a

significant impact in enhancing the Fairfax County Public Library as well as enriching the lives of those who live, work and study in our community.

If you wish to join other volunteers in making a tax-deductible contribution, please visit www.fcplfoundation.org. You can also mail your gift to:

FCPL Foundation, Inc.,
12000 Government Center Parkway
Suite 324, Fairfax, VA 22035

Volunteer opportunities are also available with the library foundation. To learn more about volunteer opportunities, please contact Martina Murphy at 703-324-8300 or e-mail info@fcplfoundation.org.

Thank you for the many ways you enhance our library!

Volunteer Opportunities

The Fairfax County Public Library is recruiting volunteers. Please help the agency advertise its opportunities by clipping this list and sharing it with friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, workplace volunteer programs, schools, clubs or houses of worship – wherever someone may be able to help.

Winter 2006

Deliver pre-selected books to homebound customers once a month for Access Services (Fairfax County Government Center). Requires good knowledge of books, access to car and ability to lift bags of books. Access Services also needs volunteers with computer skills to check books in and out during weekday daytime hours. Adults. Beena.Pandey@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-324-8380.

Assist with clerical tasks (filing, photocopying, word processing, preparing mailings) at Library Administration (Fairfax County Government Center), weekday daytime hours. Minimum age 16. Linda.Gifford@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-324-8324.

Scan community newspapers for articles about the Fairfax County Public Library at Library Administration (Fairfax County Government Center), weekday daytime hours. Two to three hours per week. Adults. Kay.Garrison@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-324-8305.

Help process gift books at the Fairfax City Regional Library. Add gift book copies to the library's database and cover hard-back books. Training provided. Ideal qualifications: library experience and computer skills. Must be available for at least a year. Adults. Pam.Johnson@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-293-6227.

Work at the checkout desk on Friday afternoons at the Kings Park Library (Burke). Adults. One year commitment. Susan.OBoyle@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-978-5600.

Locate reserved books for customers at the Patrick Henry Library (Vienna) any weekday, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Adults. One year commitment. Marcia.Ferreira@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-938-0405. Patrick Henry also needs volunteers to teach Word/MS Office. Adults. Barbara.DeBeaufort@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-938-0405.

Offer computer instruction at the Thomas Jefferson Library (Falls Church). Volunteer will teach the use of the Internet, databases, and the library's catalog. Must have previous experience as a computer instructor. Helen.Critchfield@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-573-1060.

"Weeders and Readers" are needed to help with gardening and landscaping projects at the Pohick Regional Library (Burke) on Tuesday mornings. Contact Karen Knopes at 703-690-2039.

Master Gardener to work with "weeders and readers" at the Pohick Regional Library (Burke) to coordinate planting, landscaping and maintenance of library grounds. Contact Karen Knopes at 703-690-2039.

"Adopt the Library Grounds" volunteers at the Pohick Regional Library (Burke) to keep the area free of litter and debris. Contact Gari Plehal at 703-644-7333, ext. 206.

Spanish Language Intern volunteer is needed at the Chantilly Regional Library to teach a basic Spanish language class to library staff. Must be fluent in Spanish. Bonnie.Worcester@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-502-3883.

Offer computer instruction at the Richard Byrd Library (Springfield). Adults. Jerry.Herrera@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-451-8055.

Teach MS Office Suite at the George Mason Regional Library (Annandale) Adults. Nancy.Ehlke@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-256-3800.

Many branches also seek volunteers to organize shelves (ages 12 and up, or as a family); help the children's department by preparing program materials (ages 14 and up); check in books (adults); or, with MLS degree, provide support for the information department in providing reference service.

Training is available for all positions. For information, contact Kate.Wanderer@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-324-8332. To visit the volunteer section of the library's Web site, or to apply online, go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library and click on "Do You Know...You Can Volunteer at the Library?"



Show of Hands is published by the Fairfax County Public Library, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 324, Fairfax, VA 22035, 703-324-3100. Contact the Director of Volunteer Programs, Kate Wanderer, at 703-324-8332 or kate.wanderer@fairfaxcounty.gov. Visit the library's Web site at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library



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♿ Reasonable accommodations will be made upon request. Call 703-324-8380 or TTY 703-324-8365.

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